

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application based on the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Upon entry of the above amendments, claims 1, 3-16, and 18-23, as amended, and new claims 24-25 will be pending.

Applicants note, with appreciation, that claims 7-11 and 13-16 are merely objected to for depending from a rejected claim but are considered to be free of the prior art.

In order to materially expedite prosecution and place the application in condition for allowance, claim 1 is amended to incorporate the embodiment wherein the antimicrobial polymer is an antimicrobial polymeric biguanide. This feature is now included in all of the pending claims.

Claim 6 is amended to be consistent with the amended claim 1.

Claim 10 is amended to incorporate the definitions of X and Y from claim 8.

Claims 19 and 20 are amended to depend from only claim 1. New claims 24 and 25 are corresponding claims dependent on claim 18.

Accordingly, no new matter is presented.

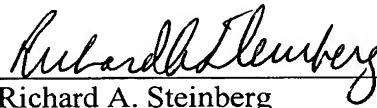
In view of the foregoing amendments the rejection of claims 1, 3-5, 12, 18 and 20, as anticipated by SU 619489; the rejection of claims 1-6, 12 and 18-23 as anticipated by WO 98/02492; and the rejection of claim 17 as anticipated by Lewis et al; have been avoided and, therefore, are respectfully traversed. None of the cited references disclose an antimicrobial polymeric biguanide carrying a covalently bound chromophoric marker. Therefore, none of the pending claims are anticipated by the cited references.

Therefore, all objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Should any issues remain unresolved, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney for Applicants at the telephone number indicated below in order to expeditiously resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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